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Department of State

TELEGRAM

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-14 ADS-00 CIAE-00 OODE-00
PM-07 M-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00
ACDA-12 SY-08 SYE-00 OCT-02 RP-10 SR-04 MA-06
SPRS-02 SMS-01 /130 M
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FM ANCONSUL PESHAWAR
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 1222
INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE
SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0764
USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY BEIJING

DETAILS OF THE MESSAGE
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[Handwritten: impact B11.30379/5]

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E.O. 12065: ADS-4 10/27/00 (ARCHARD, D.B) OR-M
TAGS: SREF, PEPR, PINS, MOPS, AF, PK, UR
SUBJECT: HELICOPTER ATTACKS ON NORTH WAZIRISTAN

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)
2. SUMMARY: TOLD ME
THAT OCTOBER 24 GUNSHIP HELICOPTER ATTACKS INVOLVED
THREE PLACES IN REMOTE NORTH WAZIRISTAN AGENCY, INCLUDING
THE ZAN CHINA REFUGEE CAMP. THERE WERE NO DEATHS AND
THE THREE WOUNDED WERE ALL PAKISTANI TRIBESMEN. THERE
WERE NO SOVIET LOSSES, AS NO PAK TROOPS WERE IN AREA
WHICH IS CLOSED TO THEM. ATTACK COULD HAVE BEEN PROMPTED
BY ANTI-SOVIET, ANTI-AFGHAN STANCE OF LOCAL TRADERS;
INTENDED TO DEMONSTRATE REFUGEE AND PAK VULNERABILITY;
RELATED TO FAIZ MOHAMMED KILLING; AND/OR BEEN A TEST OF
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PAK MILITARY REACTION TIME. PREVIOUS DAY, MIG WITH

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AFGHAN MARKINGS OVERFLEW PARACHINAR ON PROBABLE PHOTO-RECON MISSION. PAK AIR FORCE PROBABLY SCRAMBLED JETS BUT HAD NOT ENOUGH TIME FOR CONTACT. DOES NOT THINK INCIDENTS SERIOUS. REFUGEE HORROR PROBABLY HAS NOT BEEN AFFECTED, HE SAYS, AND INSURGENT FIGURES AGREE. OFFICIALS AND MEN ON PESHAWAR STREETS SEEM NOT OVERLY CONCERNED BUT PPP SUPPORTERS ARE QUICK TO PICK UP THIS ANTI-ZIA STICK. END SUMMARY.

3. I CALLED [] TO DISCUSS THE ATTACKS TWO DAYS EARLIER BY SIX GUNSHIP HELICOPTERS ON LOCATIONS IN NORTH WAZIRISTAN AGENCY. [] TOLD ME THE FOLLOWING:

4. THE HELICOPTERS FIRED MACHINE GUNS AND ROCKETS AT THREE SEPARATE PLACES IN THE AGENCY: TWO PAK TRIBAL VILLAGES, SHERKUK, ON THE TOCHI RIVER (RIGHT ON THE DURAND LINE) AND VILLAGE BAIKHEL; AND THE ZANCHINA REFUGEE CAMP NEAR DATTAKHEL, ABOUT 10 TO 12 MILES FROM THE BORDER. THE THREE CASUALTIES, WHICH I SAID WERE ALL PAKISTANI TRIBESMEN, CAME FROM THE FIRST LOCATION. ONLY ONE'S WOUNDS REQUIRED TREATMENT IN PESHAWAR, ANOTHER WAS TREATED IN THE AGENCY HOSPITAL AT MIRANSHAH AND A THIRD HAD ONLY MINOR INJURIES.

5. [] HAD NO INFORMATION ON THE TACTICS USED BY THE HELICOPTER PILOTS WHO ARE ASSUMED HERE TO HAVE BEEN SOVIETS FLYING MI-24S.

6. [] EXPLAINED THAT, DUE TO THE PECULIAR POLITICAL NATURE OF THE AREA INVOLVED, THERE WERE NO GOVERNMENT TROOPS FOR DEFENSE, THUS NO SOVIET LOSSES. THIS IS
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BECAUSE MUCH OF NORTH WAZIRISTAN AGENCY CONSISTS OF UN-PROTECTED TRIBAL TERRITORY, INCLUDING THE AREAS ATTACKED. (BRIEFLY, THERE IS NO GOVERNMENT PRESENCE IN UNPROTECTED AREAS - NO TROOPS, NO OFFICIALS, NO ROADS - WHILE ALL ARE FOUND IN THE PROTECTED TRIBAL AREAS, ALONG WITH SCHOOL, ELECTRICITY, ETC.) IN 1947, MOST OF THE TRIBAL AGENCIES CONSISTED OF UNPROTECTED TERRITORY.

THEY OPENED A NEW ROAD IN SOUTH WAZIRISTAN AND PUT A

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BORDER POST AT BEANUD. TODAY, THE MOST IMPORTANT NON-PROTECTED AREAS ARE IN NORTH AND SOUTH WAZIRISTAN AND KHYBER AGENCY. IN THE LATTER AREA, THE TIRAH REGION REMAINS CLOSED TO THE GOVERNMENT, AND HENCE A SUBJECT OF CONCERN AS A POSSIBLE INVASION. STILL, THE GOP MUST RESIST TRIBAL SENSITIVITIES OR RISK BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PROBLEMS.

7. [] NOTED THAT PART OF AREA HIT IS NATAKHEL TRIBAL REGION (AKHEL IS A PATHAN SUB-TRIBE). RECENTLY, TWO NATAKHEL MALIKS (CHIEFS), MADIR KHAN AND NIAZ ALI KHAN, HAVE SHIFTED FROM TRADITIONALLY PRO-AFGHAN TO ANTI-RUSSIAN/PRO-PAKISTANI POSTURES. IN DOING SO, NIAZ WENT AFTER A RIVAL WHO LEANS TOWARD KABUL. CAPTURING HIS HOUSE AND TEN RIFLES. [] OPINED THAT HIS ACTIONS COULD HAVE PROMPTED THE GUNSHIP ATTACKS. ALSO, AFGHAN FRONTIERS MINISTER FAIZ MOHAMMAD HAD BEEN NEGOTIATING WITH TRIBESMEN FROM THIS GENERAL AREA BEFORE HIS RECENT DEATH. POSSIBLY [] THERE WAS SOME LINK BETWEEN THE TWO EVENTS.

8. MORE PROBABLY, [] THE SOVIETS WANTED TO WARN BOTH THE REFUGEES AND THE GOP THAT THEY ARE VULNERABLE. HENCE, SO FEW CASUALTIES, EVEN THOUGH

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ZANCHINA CAMP IS LARGE AND CROWDED. (HE COMPARED IT TO
THE LARGE JAMRUD CAMP NEAR HERE WHICH MANY VISITING
AMERICANS HAVE SEEN.)

9. THE DAY BEFORE ATTACK, AN ENEMY AIRCRAFT WAS
SIGHTED OVER PARACHINAR IN KURRUM AGENCY ON WHAT PAKS
THINK MAY HAVE BEEN A PHOTO RECONNAISSANCE MISSION
PREPARATORY TO THE ATTACK. 7 UNKNOWN MOELL
NIG WITH ITS AFGHAN MARKINGS CLEARLY VISIBLE FLEW LOW
AND STRAIGHT OVER AREA BUT DID NOT "BUZZ" IT. THEY
PROBABLY WANTED TO CONFIRM A RUMOR THAT ADDITIONAL
TROOPS HAD BEEN MOVED INTO KURRUM AFTER THE TWO SOVIET
AIR ATTACKS IN BAJAUR IN LATE SEPTEMBER. CONFIRMED
THAT PAK ARMY HAS MOVED A MIXED BATTALION THERE. ARMED
WITH ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS BUT NO CROTALE MISSILES.
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10. PAK AIR FORCE "MUST HAVE" SCRAMBLED INTERCEPTORS

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TO OPPOSE INTRUDERS. BUT AS AREA IS "20 MINUTES" FROM BOTH PESHAWAR AND SARGODHA AIR BASES, THERE WAS NOT ENOUGH TIME (HE DID NOT KNOW HOW LONG HELICOPTERS STAYED IN PAKISTAN) TO MEET THEM. AS FOR KOHAT AIR BASE "THEY DON'T HAVE IT" (PRESUMABLY MEANING NO SUITABLE AIRCRAFT ARE STATIONED THERE). POSSIBLY, ATTACKS WERE INTENDED AS A TEST OF PAK DEFENSES AND REACTION TIME.

11. I ASKED IF THE INCIDENTS OF THE 24TH WERE REGARDED AS SERIOUS. HE THOUGHT NOT, AS CASUALTIES HAD BEEN LIGHT AND NO MILITARY POSTS OR APPROACH ROADS ATTACKED. STILL, THE PAKISTANI PUBLIC MIGHT CONSIDER THEM SERIOUS BECAUSE THEY WERE MULTIPLE. HE DOUBTED, THOUGH, IF REFUGEE OR INSURGENT MORALE WOULD BE AFFECTED.

12. NOR DO PESHAWAR RESIDENTS SEEM OVERLY CONCERNED, ALTHOUGH AT LEAST SOME PPP SUPPORTERS ARE USING THE ISSUE TO ATTACK PRESIDENT ZIA. A RETIRED AIR FORCE OFFICER CALLS THE INCIDENTS "PIN-PRICKS." AN OFFICER IN MARTIAL LAW HEADQUARTERS THINKS THE SOVIETS ARE SIMPLY TESTING PAK REACTION TIME. ONE SHOPKEEPER PHILOSOPHICALLY SEES THE ATTACKS AS A ROUTINE PART OF LIFE. SEVERAL OTHER PERSONS VOICED NO OPINIONS.

13. MORE NEGATIVELY, A UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR SEES THE ATTACKS AS BAD OMENS. BUT THE MOST OUTSPOKENLY CONCERNED ARE PPP SUPPORTERS LIKE MY DRIVER, AN ALARMIST WHO WILL USE ANY INCIDENT TO BERATE MARTIAL LAW AUTHORITIES AND ZIA. LIKE ANOTHER SOURCE, HE THINKS THAT SOLDIER ZIA
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IS NOT EQUIPPED TO HANDLE WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY A POLITICAL PROBLEM.

14. EMBASSY NOTE: DEPARTMENT WILL NOTE DIFFERENCES IN DETAILS OF ATTACKS.

WE ARE
UNABLE TO RECONCILE THE REPORTS FURTHER EXCEPT TO NOTE THAT

VERSION.

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15. MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. ARCHARD

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